

SOIL AND VEGETATION

134 The North China Plain is covered with a layer of alluvial soil. In colors ranging from light yellow to dark brown, the soil varies from saline to calcareous. Some parts of the plain are sandy. Along the coast of Hopei Province, the soil has a distinct saline character. The extreme north-eastern and the western parts of Hopei lie under deep layers of black and dark brown soil which are calciferous in nature. Light and dark brown calciferous soil cover most of the eastern portion of Shansi Province. The upper layer of this type of soil is usually lighter in color because of the loss of its calciferous content through erosion. It has a low humus content. In western Shansi, loess, a fine silt, spreads over the land, with a depth of 150 feet at many places. Loess is yellow-brown in color and calcareous in character. In the river valleys in Shansi Province, the yellow soil is predominantly alluvial.

●137 Extensive cultivation in the North China Plain
241 leaves very little land for natural vegetation. Kaoliang and wheat occupy most of the flat acreage, and orchards of pears, apples and dates which grow well in cool climate are planted on the surrounding hills. Semi-desert plants are found in northern Shansi Province. Trees of the mulberry family and hardy, slow-growing types cover central Shansi. Vegetable and fruit cultivation prevails in the river valleys.